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Chairman: Mr. Bródi ..... (Hungary)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/61/206, A/61/694 and Add.1, A/61/806 and Add.1, A/61/822, A/61/823, A/61/957 and A/61/1029; A/62/7/Add.14, A/62/185, A/62/186, A/62/215, A/62/285, A/62/315, A/62/628 and Add.1, A/62/707 and Add.1, A/62/845 and Add.1 and A/62/890; A/C.5/62/L.9; A/63/132, A/63/189, A/63/202, A/63/204, A/63/208, A/63/221, A/63/282, A/63/285, A/63/290, A/63/298, A/63/301, A/63/310 and Add.1-3 and A/63/526; A/C.5/63/3 and Add.1 and 2)

1. **Mr. Debabeche** (Algeria), stressing the importance of the symbiosis that should exist between sovereign mandates and their implementation by a corps of highly qualified, motivated staff characterized by integrity, with clearly defined responsibilities and the necessary legal protection to perform their tasks, noted that an organization was only as good as its management, and that any discussion of the introduction of modern management practices would miss the point if it failed to take that into account. The credibility of the United Nations, with an ambitious workload in such areas as peace and security, human rights and development, was damaged each time it failed to act or one of its officials behaved inappropriately. The comments of the Secretary-General on the selection and recruitment of senior management did not address that vital concern. The announcement by the Secretary-General, in the spring of 2008, of an independent selection commission for senior Secretariat staff was an important step forward, though reform should also take into account the principle of equitable geographical rotation of all Secretariat posts. A transparent selection process had as its corollary the recruitment of senior managers characterized by independence, intellectual honesty, an acute sense of ethical behaviour and, above all, accountability.

2. In that connection, the terms of General Assembly resolution 59/272, on the mechanisms for defining responsibilities and strengthening accountability, had not been strictly adhered to. His delegation also regretted the failure to take account of General Assembly resolutions 60/260 and 61/245 and the Secretary-General's lack of consultation with other organizations and oversight bodies. It stressed the need to take a fresh look at the statute of the International Civil Service Commission, whose role was not merely to determine percentage salary increases for United Nations staff.

3. He congratulated the Procurement Task Force on its professionalism, despite the difficulties associated with its creation and operation, and supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation for its competencies to be permanently incorporated within the Organization. With regard to internal control, his delegation reiterated its call for the Office of Internal Oversight Services to be totally independent of the Secretariat, since that was the only way to guarantee an objective assessment of staff members' behaviour.

4. On the subject of recruitment, it was intolerable that countries with the same assessed contributions should be represented differently within the Secretariat; his country was one of those that suffered from such an imbalance. A road map to remedy that situation should be implemented without delay, pending fundamental reform of the Galaxy system. It was also time to put an end to the diversity of contractual arrangements for staff members with the same background and duties and, as the Organization prepared to embark on an ambitious technology project, to review the posts of staff members with highly technical functions in order to recruit and retain the best staff in a competitive market.

5. Turning to the issue of mobility, his delegation believed that it should be purely voluntary for existing staff members and should give them the opportunity to move from field to headquarters locations. New vacancy announcements should, however, mention the possibility of a transfer to the field; staff members recruited on that basis would not then be entitled to refuse a subsequent posting to a different duty station.

6. Since staff members also needed an objective system of protection, his delegation was pleased to have played a role in developing a new internal justice system and was certain that its implementation would have positive outcomes. It congratulated the members of the Sixth Committee on their excellent work in preparing, inter alia, the draft statutes of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal, stressing that, since reform could not be imposed, success would depend first and foremost on dialogue between the major stakeholders.

7. **Mr. Alsubeihi** (Yemen) said that human resources development was the cornerstone of the development process. His country was unrepresented in

the Secretariat, and was also one of the least developed countries that lacked the technology to access vacancy announcements through the Galaxy system. That circumstance made it very difficult for candidates from Yemen to submit applications for posts. It was therefore necessary to simplify the recruitment process, particularly for applicants from the least developed countries, and to give them sufficient time to submit their applications. Those countries should be officially notified when there were vacancies with a view to improving equitable geographical distribution. That would enhance the credibility and transparency of the Organization. The procedures followed in selecting staff for appointment should also reflect the independence of the international civil service. His country had many well-qualified employees who met the high level of competence required for recruitment to the Secretariat, but the factors he had mentioned, particularly the time limit, adversely affected the chances of candidates from the least developed countries.

8. Reform of the recruitment process should result in a fair and comprehensive system that would improve the chances of candidates from countries such as his own who wished to apply for posts in the Secretariat.

9. **Mr. Shin** Boonam (Republic of Korea) said that, since the competitiveness of human capital was one of the main factors ensuring sustained economic growth in the current knowledge-based era, the Organization's human resources were critical to the effective implementation of its mandates. Successful human resources management reform was therefore a prerequisite for obtaining the expected outcomes and benefits of other management reforms over the long term.

10. While his delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that human resources management reform, like other reform issues, should take into account cost-benefit analysis and the principles of efficiency and effectiveness, it was equally important to have high regard for staff morale. Commending the Secretariat on the progress achieved in human resources management reform since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on investing in people (A/61/255), including in relation to the development of a new talent management system, he welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to enhance its transparency and improve interaction with Member States, which would help to strengthen mutual trust.

11. Agreement was urgently required on two important matters deferred from the previous session: the streamlining of contractual arrangements and the harmonization of conditions of service, which were fundamental to other areas of human resources management reform such as mobility. His delegation believed that Member States were responsible for ensuring implementation of the new framework as of 1 July 2009, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/248, and urged the Secretariat to provide additional information on related matters, as detailed in the Advisory Committee's report (A/63/526).

12. Although the Secretariat had made considerable efforts to improve both the geographical balance of United Nations staff, pursuant to Article 101 of the Charter, and its gender balance, much remained to be done. The Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/63/310) indicated that there had been 40 unrepresented and underrepresented countries as at 30 June 2008, unchanged from the previous year. Women also remained underrepresented, inter alia, at the higher levels, representing around 18.5 per cent of total staff members at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General grades. The Secretariat should therefore redouble its efforts to improve its gender and geographical balance. His delegation called for such issues to be given due attention throughout the process of structuring the talent management framework, particularly at the initial stage of strategic workforce planning and development of rosters.

13. The Secretary-General's proposal to reduce the vacancy advertisement period from 60 to 30 days should be pursued, provided that such a change did not limit the opportunities for potential applicants around the world to apply. While acknowledging that the national competitive recruitment examination had served as a major cost-effective recruitment tool to provide the United Nations with highly qualified young Professionals at entry level, taking into account geographical distribution, his delegation concurred with the Joint Inspection Unit that some weaknesses needed to be addressed. Most importantly, both the examination process and the process of recruiting successful candidates from the roster should be shortened, so that such candidates were not forced to seek other job opportunities owing to the long waiting period.

14. Since the modernization of human resources functions was one of the key target areas of enterprise resource planning, the Office of Human Resources Management should engage fully in the introduction of the enterprise resource planning system with a view to bringing about efficiency gains.

15. **Ms. Dutt** (India) said that, since an organization's human resources largely determined its success or failure, it was vital for the United Nations to have a well-trained, multi-skilled and committed workforce able to confront the growing challenges and complexities faced by the Organization. It was therefore important not only to recruit and retain high-quality staff but also to motivate them for continuous skills enhancement. Those objectives could only be achieved through the collective efforts of the management and staff, with unwavering support from Member States.

16. Given the critical importance of human resources reform and the Secretary-General's many proposals, she was disappointed that the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/63/282), while giving an overview of previous reform proposals and progress achieved, did not provide sufficient statistical data to substantiate that progress or include benchmarks against which it could be measured. Her delegation also concurred with the Advisory Committee's analysis that the report did not set out the financial implications of the proposed initiatives or clear timelines for their implementation. Above all, it failed to analyse the interrelationships between the various human resources reform proposals, which were interlinked and required synchronized implementation.

17. While the Office of Human Resources Management was to be commended for its efforts, given the magnitude of its task and the relative scarcity of its resources, her delegation was concerned by the findings of the in-depth evaluation of that Office, by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/63/221), which underscored that the credibility of the staff selection process was not highly rated by stakeholders with regard to facilitating promotional opportunities, identifying highly qualified external candidates and fully supporting gender balance and geographical representation goals. Other areas of concern, including lengthy staff selection time frames, the lack of an integrated approach to career development and the failure of the managed mobility policy, were also highlighted. Her delegation endorsed the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, particularly with regard to the need to develop an integrated framework to enhance the staff selection process, provide better support for career development and promote staff mobility; streamline the delegation of authority; and prioritize the implementation of human resources reform initiatives, being convinced that those measures would help to facilitate effective and efficient human resources management.

18. While welcoming the Secretary-General's aim of implementing an integrated workforce planning system by establishing a talent management framework, she expressed surprise that, in a large and geographically diverse international civil service, it had not been done much earlier, since it would have addressed a number of challenges, including the cost and length of the recruitment process, high vacancy rates and succession planning. Implementation of the workforce planning system should entail the installation of a robust monitoring system to ensure accountability for planning and performance, especially at senior management levels, and to effectively monitor the delegation of human resources authority.

19. With regard to career development and support, training was vital to staff development. The United Nations should nurture talent and encourage professional development on the part of its staff as a means of creating an efficient, versatile and multi-skilled workforce. Her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that a more integrated, strategic and results-based approach to training, encompassing both Headquarters and the field, was needed to meet the emerging needs of the United Nations, that clear linkages should be made between training programmes and career paths and that measures to identify and promote future leaders in the Organization — as well as the staff recruitment process at all levels, particularly senior management grades — should be inclusive, transparent, non-discriminatory and merit-based.

20. While a credible, fair and fully functioning performance appraisal system was clearly critical to effective human resources management, various surveys of Secretariat staff had indicated a lack of faith in the existing system. In order to develop a culture where staff were rewarded for performance and penalized for underperformance, it was essential that

appraisals should capture their performance accurately. Her delegation therefore encouraged the Secretary-General to address the reported shortcomings in the existing performance appraisal system without delay and establish clear links between performance and future career paths, as an important step towards rewarding excellence and strengthening accountability.

21. It was important to move with deliberate haste on the streamlining of contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service, which were important outstanding issues with a direct bearing on the overall functioning of the Organization. Multiple contractual arrangements were undeniably inefficient; it was also demoralizing as well as unfair to have disparate compensation, benefits and entitlement schemes among staff performing similar functions. Her delegation therefore looked forward to a satisfactory resolution of those critical issues in the coming weeks.

22. The declared goal of the mobility policy was to develop a versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service. Mobility was also expected to increase the Secretariat's flexibility and responsiveness, improve its programme delivery capacity and offer increased staff development and career advancement opportunities. In that light, noting that the Secretary-General had reported difficulties in the implementation of the managed reassignment programme, and that the Office of Internal Oversight Services had also been critical of that programme, she called on the Secretary-General to undertake the proposed comprehensive review of the mobility policy, taking into account lessons learned from the managed mobility programme, the evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the outcome of staff-management consultations. While there were challenges in achieving the desired outcomes, the eventual implementation of the mobility policy, if approved by the General Assembly, would have to be based on a clear definition of mobility and carried out in a fair, transparent and inclusive manner at all levels of the Secretariat.

23. On recruitment and staffing, she welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve gender and geographical distribution targets, but called for additional measures, including intensive outreach activities, to improve the situation, which was far from satisfactory. With regard to the sharp increase in the use of consultants and individual contractors reported by the Secretary-General, and the fact that a majority of consultants had been engaged for programme implementation and advisory services, normally the responsibility of regular staff, her delegation believed that consultants should only be hired in instances where the necessary in-house skills and expertise were not available, in which case equitable geographical representation should be maintained. Factors contributing to the use of consultants should be identified and appropriate steps taken to address skills gaps within the Secretariat.

24. The expeditious implementation of human resources management reform was particularly important given the transformation of the United Nations from a conference-servicing body to a more field-oriented and operational organization, undertaking ever more complex tasks in the areas of peace and security and economic and social issues. Reform did not come free, but although the initial costs might appear considerable, over the long term the investment would yield high dividends in the form of more efficient and effective delivery of mandates and programme implementation. It was therefore in the Member States' common interest to judiciously provide the resources needed to implement that much-needed and pressing reform.

25. **Mr. Scanlon** (United States of America) said that the Committee's consideration of the Secretariat's proposals for human resources management reform for the second time in 2008 underscored the importance it gave to that issue. While one of its main tasks would be to resume its deliberations on the streamlining of contracts and harmonization of conditions of service, it would also need to consider the many other important issues set out in the reports before it.

26. Noting the Secretary-General's strong emphasis on talent management, his delegation considered that success in that area, which concerned the most valuable resource of the United Nations, its staff, would help to ensure that the Organization's workforce was prepared to meet current and future challenges. It concurred with the recommendations in the Advisory Committee's report (A/63/526) that more progress should be made in such areas as workforce planning and monitoring, career development and training, performance management, strengthening of leadership and management capacity, and use of information technology in human resources management, as well as sharing the Advisory Committee's concern that the Secretary-General's most recent report on human

resources management (A/63/282) did not provide sufficient data to substantiate the progress reported, benchmarks against which it could be measured or an indication of the financial implications of the proposed initiatives. Given the large amount of regular and developmental work that the Office of Human Resources Management must perform, that Office should prioritize its work so as to attain the most important goals first, as recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Advisory Committee.

27. Action was essential to address problems in the recruitment and retention of field staff, as well as the related issues of contractual arrangements and harmonization. At the first part of the resumed sixty-second session, in March 2008, the Committee had deliberated at length over proposals for streamlining contracts and harmonizing conditions of service, without reaching agreement. Since then, his delegation had made a strenuous effort to better understand those very complex issues, as a result of which it had determined that it could not agree with the Secretary-General's current proposal, or with the proposal before the Committee in March 2008. While in the best of all possible worlds, consideration might be given to abandoning the existing system for calculating the basic overall package of compensation and benefits and implementing a more modern and simpler system, in view of the short time remaining and the complexity of such an undertaking his delegation had resolved to develop alternative proposals that adhered closely to the current system. It intended to share its ideas for consideration by the Committee and, aware that such consideration would raise difficult issues, it committed itself to working closely with its colleagues in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.

28. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation to defer consideration of the introduction of the special operations approach for field duty stations, believing that other measures could be taken to improve recruitment and staff retention at those duty stations. The validity of the special operations approach had not been proven and it was too costly.

29. The Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/63/310) showed that progress had been made towards achieving equitable geographical and gender representation, which his delegation strongly supported. He encouraged the Secretariat to make further improvements in that regard, particularly on the issue of underrepresented and overrepresented States.

30. Noting the progress made in implementing the Assembly's package of reforms and the Organization's three-pronged strategy to prevent misconduct, enforce United Nations standards of conduct and ensure remedial action, his delegation called on both United Nations personnel and Member States to work towards creating a culture that enforced zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse. It was disappointed that, despite the Organization's efforts to recruit and employ staff with the highest levels of competence, efficiency and, in particular, integrity, there were still too many incidents of misconduct and criminal behaviour. In view of the number of cases of fraud, theft and misappropriation listed in the report of the Secretary-General on actions taken in cases of proven misconduct and/or criminal behaviour (A/63/202), as well as the significant resources contributed by Member States to fund the Organization's mandates, he urged the Assembly to consider additional actions to recover United Nations funds stolen by staff members, including by accessing other assets owned by those staff members or garnishing their pensions.

31. His delegation noted recent efforts to inculcate a culture of ethics and integrity in the Secretariat, as detailed in the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/63/301), and highlighted the importance of the comprehensive risk assessment of the Ethics Office information systems and data, the results of which were yet to be reported. It was also vital to provide staff with a clear understanding of the functions of the different offices responsible for ethics, grievances, staff conduct and discipline, and other personnel matters, so that they knew where to raise their concerns.

32. On the issue of mobility in the Secretariat, although the Secretary-General's report (A/63/208) mentioned the difficulties encountered in implementing the mobility policy, it did not provide an evaluation of its effectiveness. His delegation looked forward to a thorough review of that policy, taking into account the recommendations of the Human Resources Management Task Force.

33. With regard to recruitment, he strongly supported steps to reduce the time it took to hire staff, including by reducing the time period for vacancy

announcements, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report on recruitment and staffing (A/63/285). As for the proposed establishment of a roster-based approach for staff selection, given the importance and complexity of the proposal, he agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General should present more detailed proposals based on an in-depth evaluation of the current roster system.

34. **Mr. Loy** Hui Chen (Singapore) said that just as his country's steady economic development had been due to its consistent strong emphasis on the development of human resources, so the United Nations needed to reform its human resources policies in order to equip the Organization with staff who could continue its work in the future. His delegation broadly agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal to streamline contractual arrangements and harmonize conditions of service. At the same time, however, in order to try to pre-empt problems that might arise in the future, the reforms should be comprehensive and address related issues such as recruitment, staff performance and training.

35. The new human resources policies should aim to maintain a competent and well-equipped staff to carry out the growing number of mandates, both in the field and at Headquarters. While staff selection should be on the basis of merit, it was also essential for the staff to reflect the character of the Organization's Member States, in particular through equitable geographical representation, which remained lopsided, particularly in some departments. Geographical representation should not be seen as an aim in itself, but, rather, as a way to tap talent from diverse sources. That could only add value to the Organization and make it stronger.

36. A rigorous performance appraisal system was the cornerstone of any human resources management framework. International civil servants must be held accountable for their performance, and there should be penalties for poor performance, an element lacking in the senior managers' compacts. His delegation was not advocating a culture of fault-finding but a credible and transparent system that identified those who performed well and took to task those who performed badly. In that context there was also a need for systematic training and a good system of mobility.

37. A satisfactory balance between staff continuity and mobility should be an essential part of the Organization's human resources policies. While mobility helped to make the United Nations more flexible and responsive and to foster staff development, it should not lead to a loss of specialized knowledge within the Organization. The upcoming wave of retirements, in which some 30 to 40 per cent of senior staff would leave in the next few years, would represent a huge loss of valuable experience and institutional memory. That called for urgent succession planning and a more strategic and holistic perspective in devising long-term solutions to serve the overall interests of the United Nations and its staff. New blood must be injected at all levels while allowing deserving staff to move up the ranks.

38. **Mr. Lwin** (Myanmar) noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in implementing human resources management reform. Ethics, fairness, transparency and accountability were just as important as efficiency in strengthening the United Nations and should be features of all future reforms.

39. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's proposals on streamlining contractual arrangements through the use of three types of contract and harmonizing conditions of service by establishing one set of staff rules, and hoped that would allow the Organization to retain experienced and qualified civilian staff for the Secretariat, including in the field.

40. He welcomed the efforts by the Office of Human Resources Management to introduce a new talent management system to handle recruitment. The system would also improve conditions of service and establish a single centralized human resources management tool for the global Secretariat.

41. His delegation had noted with concern that the proportion of successful candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented countries had continued to fall over the previous few years, while the proportion of staff from overrepresented countries had nearly doubled. He reiterated that, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 55/258, achieving equitable geographical distribution and gender balance should be a priority for the Organization and its agencies, funds and programmes.

42. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that it was imperative to ensure equity and fairness for staff members in the United Nations system during the human resources reform process. The new recruitment system should give equal opportunities to all candidates at all levels.

43. On the issue of gender, the Secretary-General should make greater efforts to promote women — particularly women from developing countries, and from Africa above all — to the highest positions in the Secretariat.

44. With respect to the geographical distribution of posts, there was no reason for the significant numbers of overrepresented and unrepresented States. To ensure equitable geographical representation, the Secretariat should set specific short- and middle-term goals, which should be periodically assessed by the Member States.

45. It was unfortunate that the United Nations had hired some 7,000 consultants in 2007 at a cost of over $100 million, at a time when the Development Account was inadequately funded and important development programmes were drastically short of funds. The use of consultants should be scrutinized to find savings. The money saved could be used for staff training focusing on areas requiring specific skills, such as information technology, interpretation and translation, and for incentives to help retain outstanding staff members.

46. His delegation invited the Secretary-General to present a comprehensive strategy to forestall problems that might arise owing to the impending retirement of thousands of staff in the Professional and higher categories, many of whom were in positions subject to geographical distribution, and to deal with difficulties in recruiting staff for language positions, particularly for French.

47. **Mr. Safaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that a phased approach to human resources management reforms was most appropriate, so that the effects of previous measures could be evaluated before further steps were taken. The proposals made to Member States should evince strategic planning that incorporated, inter alia, career development, transparency, accountability and geographical representation. His delegation wished to see, in particular, a credible and efficient performance appraisal system.

48. The national competitive examination was the most useful recruitment tool for achieving benchmarks in geographical and gender representation. Flaws in the examination could be corrected by implementing the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Board of Auditors. As recommended by the Advisory Committee, the scope of the examination should be broadened to cover more posts than those subject to geographical distribution. Moreover, the recruitment process should be shortened, but the length of the advertising period should be maintained so as to permit outreach to developing countries with limited communications facilities.

49. His delegation was concerned that it was compelled to repeat its request to the Secretary-General to accelerate the recruitment of candidates who had passed the national competitive examination when a large number of staff were receiving extensions beyond the mandatory age of separation. Such extensions, which the General Assembly had allowed only in exceptional circumstances, were becoming a common occurrence in many departments. He also requested information on the justification and guidelines for the use of gratis personnel from entities other than the Governments of Member States.

50. His delegation was also concerned about the unprecedented increase in the hiring of consultants and was disappointed that the Secretary-General had not provided the information on consultants and contractors requested in General Assembly resolution 57/305. It would support proposals aimed at maximizing the use of the Secretariat's in-house capacities.

51. **Mr. Shen** Yanjie (China) said that although fewer Member States were either unrepresented or underrepresented in the global Secretariat, developing countries were still underrepresented in high-level and decision-making posts, and the overall distribution of Secretariat staff remained imbalanced. He urged the Secretariat to seek effective solutions to those issues, and also welcomed the steady increase in recruitment from national competitive examinations over the past three years. The Secretariat should continue to increase such recruitment, and actively manage the roster and with a view to shortening the time needed for recruitment.

52. He welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat to streamline contracts, in which regard there was a need for clear, transparent and fair policies. It was important to deal prudently with the financial and budgetary issues arising from the transition from existing contracts to new types of appointment. Harmonization of conditions for staff working in the field and in agencies, funds and programmes would improve conditions of service and help to maintain the common

system. It would also help to attract and retain talented people.

53. He welcomed the efforts to broaden implementation of the mobility policy, and thanked the Secretariat for focusing on the lack of incentives and inadequate measures in that regard. Implementation of staff mobility required consideration of job requirements, the Organization's strategies, and the desires and career development needs of individuals. Openness, equity and fairness were important, as was ensuring that stakeholders could express their personal wishes.

54. The establishment of the Ethics Office had been important for a culture of ethics and integrity within the United Nations. He commended the results achieved by that Office. An increasing number of service requests reflected rising expectations for the Office, and he hoped it would continue to maintain its independence and fairness in discharging its mandate.

55. **Mr. Yaroshevich** (Belarus) said that there could be no excuse for the non-representation or underrepresentation of regional groups at the senior managerial levels. The principle of equitable geographical representation should be fully observed by appointing senior managerial staff from the five regional groups to the five highest posts in each department. Such appointments should be made gradually, as the opportunity arose, to remedy the current imbalance in the geographical distribution of posts.

56. He welcomed the efforts to address the imbalance in the geographical distribution of staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, but felt that more effective measures could have been taken. The national competitive examination was not sufficient to improve the situation.

57. His delegation wished to have updated information on the geographical distribution of Professional and higher staff in all departments and offices of the United Nations.

58. **Mr. Kishimoto** (Japan) said that reform of human resources management should start with a shared understanding of current problems. The current system's functioning should be carefully evaluated by all key players to identify specific issues for reform. Human resources responsibilities had been widely delegated to programme managers, who tended to focus on their immediate needs and not the longer-term interests of the Organization. The poor results obtained so far on mobility, recruitment and geographical representation revealed the need to change the human resources structure; a panel of external and independent experts should be set up to make recommendations. To achieve the aims of the Secretary-General in that area, authority for human resources should be centralized and each programme manager should be aware of the need to realize organizational goals and be accountable to the Secretary-General and the Member States.

59. Current recruitment delays appeared to derive from control by programme managers of vacancy advertisements and candidate selection, along with a lack of specific selection criteria. To facilitate the introduction of a pre-screened roster, a central human resources authority should be given responsibility for managing staff placement. Merely simplifying current procedures would not necessarily eliminate the arbitrary selection, sometimes reflecting nepotism, apparent in the current system. Further, the proposed pre-screened roster system would overlook qualified candidates from underrepresented countries for years. A fair and transparent system of selection criteria, along the lines of a personal score system that would translate work experience and organizational needs into a numerical score, was urgently needed, and strategic workforce planning should be considered in conjunction with career development policies across departments. The current excessively specialized job categories should be integrated into a broader pool so as to foster a multi-skilled workforce, while the current top-heavy structure could be corrected as large numbers of employees retired.

60. The decrease in numbers of nationals of underrepresented Member States over the past six years signalled the need for significant improvement, including strengthening the central authority of human resources management in order to achieve agreed goals; setting numerical targets in the human resources action plan and senior managers' compacts; strengthening the Management Performance Board; making participation by the Office of Human Resources Management in interview panels mandatory; centralizing recruitment authority in each department's executive office; and giving central review bodies input in candidate selection. Outreach to unrepresented

and underrepresented countries remained a continuing and core mandate of the Office.

61. To ensure successful career development in the United Nations, people with real managerial capacity should be selected for managerial posts. A 360-degree performance appraisal for all current and potential managers should be carried out and used in the selection of candidates for positions at the D-1 level and above. Clear target groups for strategic career development were needed. The functioning of the national competitive examination should be improved, beginning with a statistical analysis of staff recruited at the P-4 level and above.

62. The lack of policy integration in terms of mobility and the inherent conflict of interest between line managers and the Organization indicated the need to centralize the mobility function. While mobility was required for a healthier civil service, the current mobility policy was cumbersome, and a more strategic approach with a focused target group was needed. Moreover, dialogue between staff and management was needed to revise performance management tools. It was clear that the current performance appraisal system, having rated 99.4 per cent of staff as "fully satisfactory" or better, needed remodelling.

63. The long-term implications of streamlining contractual arrangements also needed careful consideration. Granting continuing appointments would ensure lifetime employment, forcing Member States to fund them regardless of mandates. The indefinite contracts granted in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees could serve as a useful model, as could the proposal to create career civilian peacekeeping posts through a competitive process. Contractual arrangements, essentially a recruitment tool, did not necessarily guarantee fair recruitment, mobility or integration between Headquarters and the field. If integrated human resources were considered necessary for peace operations, the Secretary-General's proposal to establish civilian career peacekeepers (A/61/850) should be carefully examined. Each mission had a finite mandate, and the distinction between the ongoing need for peace operations and the temporary need for individual missions had to be preserved in order to avoid unreasonable expectations of recurring appointment.

64. Finally, a thorough review was needed to determine whether current staff entitlements were justified. Entitlements should reflect the nature of the contract and mandate; the staff of funds and programmes were subject to a rotation policy related to long-term organizational strategy, while peace operations staff were employed to carry out mandates of finite duration at specific times and locations.

65. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that annex II to the Advisory Committee's report on human resources management (A/63/526) indicated, with respect to the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire, that the city of Abidjan had been reclassified from security phase II to phase III. He had ascertained, from the Department of Safety and Security, the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission and his Government, that Abidjan had been classified in phase II since 2007. He therefore requested the Secretariat to issue, as soon as possible, a corrigendum correctly identifying Abidjan as a family duty station, and to provide a written explanation of the change in classification.

66. At a time when Côte d'Ivoire was working painstakingly, in cooperation with the United Nations and the international community, to implement the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, it was advisable to avoid derailing the peace process. The security phase in effect had strategic and political significance for the upcoming general elections in Côte d'Ivoire: he therefore urged the Secretariat to remain consistent in its decisions to ensure the success of the election process.

67. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that he supported the Secretary-General's measures on strategic planning. Staff had been dissatisfied since more authority had been delegated to programme directors. The Office of Human Resources Management should develop oversight measures to monitor how programme managers handled that authority, and should sanction or recall any programme directors who abused their authority, while commending those who did well.

68. Mobility policy should not be a cause for fear among staff, nor should managers use it as punishment. Mobility should allow staff to gain a broader perspective and serve as ongoing training and professional development, which a complex and diverse civil service required. It must be managed with

tact and skill and be transparent to staff and Member States alike. Proper mobility planning was important, and all data assembled on mobility should be provided to the Fifth Committee to facilitate its decisions.

69. He supported simplification of contractual arrangements. Ambiguity regarding continuing contracts must be eliminated by clarifying criteria for the granting of such contracts, so that managers would not act improperly. The Advisory Committee had made relevant comments on the issue, and had also noted that staff hired for peacekeeping operations who had displayed competence, effectiveness, ability and integrity should have their contracts extended. The lack of long-term prospects at the conclusion of missions made those posts less attractive.

70. Harmonization of service, if done well, would help renew human resources and reduce staff vacancies. Harmonization of conditions of employment system-wide would promote mobility throughout the system. At the same time, that mobility must not cause turmoil in activities away from Headquarters, especially in peacekeeping operations. Finally, the Secretary-General must improve the relationship between staff and the Administration, especially at Headquarters and in Geneva.

71. **Mr. Abushawashi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that human resources management was of particular importance because of its close link with the reform of the Organization and the improvement of its management and working methods. In that regard he recalled the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter, and the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity and of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

72. His Government considered geographical representation to be particularly important. Like many others, his delegation was concerned at the fact that many countries were either unrepresented or underrepresented. His own country was currently underrepresented and its level of representation would fall still further unless a number of its nationals were appointed in the near future. That was despite the fact that his country had regularly paid its assessed contributions to the United Nations budget. As part of the reform of human resources, the Office of Human Resources Management should take appropriate measures to bring the representation of all States to acceptable levels. Measures should be taken to appoint nationals of the States concerned to the Secretariat, to which end recruitment examinations should be organized.

73. While welcoming the efforts made by the Secretary-General in that connection, his delegation drew attention to chapter IV B of the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform (A/63/282), and in particular to a contradiction between paragraphs 54 and 57 of the report concerning geographical representation and gender balance; it was not fair for candidates to be selected from an overrepresented Member State while there were 16 unrepresented and 17 underrepresented Member States.

74. He also drew attention to the question of vacancy announcements referred to in the report of the Secretary-General on recruitment and staffing (A/63/285), and in particular to the proposal that the time period for the advertisement of vacancies should be reduced from 60 to 30 days. Such a step would be prejudicial to potential recruits from many Member States with limited access to the United Nations website.

75. While appreciating the efforts that had been made to reform the United Nations, his delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would continue his efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation in all departments, and a balance between developing and developed countries, particularly with regard to senior posts.

76. **Mr. Bui The Giang** (Viet Nam) said that his delegation strongly supported human resources management reform, particularly in view of the pivotal role of the staff in the implementation of the multidisciplinary workload assigned by the Member States. Reform measures often took time to produce results, and it was therefore particularly important to ensure equal treatment of the staff, including equality of opportunity in the context of career development. Experts who had proved their value through efficient performance in the field should not be required to re-apply for their job on termination of their field assignment.

77. He supported efforts to simplify work contracts, and the intention of achieving a single set of regulations to be applicable across all United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, and urged that action should be undertaken to accelerate the harmonization and integration of conditions of service.

78. Recruitment was an issue of concern to many delegations as there were still discrepancies that hindered gender equality and balanced geographical representation, especially at senior levels. Stronger measures were needed to address that problem, in particular to improve the geographical representation of the developing countries.

79. In conclusion, he noted the Secretary-General's intention to suspend the mobility programme and review the current policy so as to incorporate lessons learned. His delegation concurred with that idea in principle but urged that two aspects of mobility should be taken into account: it helped Headquarters staff to understand the situation away from Headquarters, but it also entailed difficulties for staff and their families. He suggested that a period of perhaps five years should be spent in each location before redeployment could take place, thus minimizing the possible adverse affects on staff of the mobility policy.

80. **Mr. Kovalenko** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation would consider the Secretary-General's proposals for human resources management reform on the basis of whether they improved the staffing policy and the functioning of the Organization, satisfied the need for qualified personnel and were affordable. Unfortunately, the reports before the Committee contained no strategic vision for the development of the United Nations and its human resources management policies.

81. His delegation was of the view that the Secretary-General's proposals on contracts would have the effect of strengthening the system of career service in the Organization and would extend that system to peacekeeping operations. He had serious reservations about such an approach, both as to its effectiveness as staffing policy and its impact on costs. The new continuing contracts would in fact be quasi-permanent. Fixed-term contracts, as formulated by the Secretariat, would become a long-term probation lasting until the staff member was granted a continuing — in effect a de facto permanent — contract. Such a situation was contrary to the concept of flexible, effective personnel management responding to the changing needs of the Organization. He doubted that continuing or quasi-permanent contracts should be used at all: they would create inequitable conditions for staff members performing the same duties in the same workplace but with different degrees of job security. Furthermore, the level of protection under continuing contracts would not improve productivity or encourage professional development in staff members who were not required to demonstrate their ongoing usefulness to the Organization.

82. In addition to temporary contracts, the Committee should seriously consider using just one type of contract: fixed-term. The advantages would be that staff members would be treated equitably, the system of contracts would be simpler and therefore more comprehensible, and the problems associated with permanent contracts would be avoided. Moreover, fixed-term contracts would be an effective staff management tool because they would keep staff members committed to their work and raise productivity and accountability, since staff would be aware that the contracts were subject to renewal after a certain number of years.

83. The Secretary-General's proposals on conditions of service in non-family duty stations were costly and insufficiently justified. Moreover, the International Civil Service Commission had not proposed any realistic mechanism for their harmonization or oversight. The Commission, the Member States and the Secretariat were to blame for turning a blind eye as the funds and programmes had gradually diverged from the United Nations with respect to conditions of service in the field. The time might have come to allow the funds and programmes to leave the common system, which they were already doing in any event. As long as conditions of service at non-family duty stations were not part of the common system, which meant that General Assembly decisions on the matter were not binding on all entities of the United Nations system, it was not possible to speak of harmonization of conditions of service.

84. His delegation was prepared to discuss the use of rosters for recruiting staff, but continued to have serious concerns about the lack of transparency in staff selection, problems with the management of the system, and the likely decrease in the quality of candidates owing to the fact that they would be applying for future vacancies. He would welcome, however, any further measures aimed at shortening the timelines for staff selection.

85. The mobility policy had failed to yield positive results. Noting the Secretariat's decision to halt the process in order to assess the policy and make improvements, he stressed that any proposed

modifications must be approved by the General Assembly before being implemented.

86. On the question of geographical distribution, he pointed out that the geographical quotas were merely desirable targets. The Secretariat should take proactive measures to recruit candidates from unrepresented or underrepresented countries, but the geographical factor must not lead to discrimination against candidates from overrepresented countries. The Office of Human Resources Management should more actively explain the existing rules and procedures to departments and managers to clarify that selecting candidates from overrepresented countries did not constitute an exception to those rules.

87. **Ms. Maxfield** (Department of Field Support), replying to a question from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire said, with regard to the error in annex II to the Advisory Committee's report, that her office recognized that Abidjan was, in fact, in security phase II, and would make the appropriate correction. However, Abidjan had not yet been assigned family duty station status, and would therefore remain listed as a non-family duty station.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.